

STATE FORMATION AND COLONIAL CONTROL

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Turkey, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq,
Transjordan, and Saudi Arabia in
the 1920s and 1930s

BY THE TIME THE WAR ENDED in the Middle East in 1918, Britain held the largest military advantage of all the European powers. It maintained its protectorate over Egypt and during the war stationed troops in Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Anatolia, and Iran. After the war ended, in agreement with the Entente Powers, the British also became the dominant foreign power broker in Istanbul. French troops entered the Anatolian region of Cilicia, and French general Henri Gouraud landed troops in Beirut. Greece took control of the Anatolian port city of Izmir in May 1919. The subsequent Treaty of Sèvres of August 1920 gave Greece sovereignty over the European province of Thrace, including the old Ottoman capital of Edirne. The Italians moved into Anatolia via the port of Antalya. Russia was not included in the division of spoils because it had terminated its participation before the war's end. However, Russian troops remained along the Ottoman and Iranian borders, making it difficult to delineate clear borders between the three countries.

The years between 1918 and the early 1920s saw the emergence of the modern states of Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt, ushered in by European fiat and local action. However, by no means did the process of state formation go smoothly in any of these

new countries. The end of the war presented new opportunities for shaping the states being formed. With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire and the fragmentation and weakening of the Qajar Empire by the end of the war, many groups throughout this swath of territory rose up to defend their territories from the Europeans and other local leaders who were simultaneously moving into the political vacuum left by the war.

The rebels who emerged on the political scene in 1918 were those who had been marginalized by their governments before the war: small merchants, religious clerics, tribal shaykhs, urban workers, peasants, artisans, civil servants, and bazaaris who had been granted few positions of authority under the previous empires or who saw their local positions threatened by the configurations of states being designed by the Europeans. Some opposition groups, such as the Kurds in Turkey, sought to break away from their designated states altogether, but more often than not rebellions were led by men bidding for positions of power within the state being formed. The rebels rarely tried to coordinate their activities within the new state borders, but since a primary goal of most of the disparate groups was to keep European outsiders from colonizing their homelands, there was a proto-nationalist element in their actions. In Iran and Turkey, the rebels—led by Reza Shah and Mustafa Kemal, respectively—entered office and established authoritarian states independent of European colonial control.

In contrast, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine came under European colonial control in the aftermath of World War I; Egypt and Saudi Arabia gained partial independence. In choosing state leaders for their new colonies, the Europeans looked not to the rebels they had to militarily defeat in the months after the war ended but to the large landowners, wealthy merchants, and tribal shaykhs who had served as intermediaries in the old empires. These notables had grown strong as a result of the changes wrought by the Ottoman government in the last half of the 19th century and maintained their influence by agreeing to work on behalf of the new post–World War I European-designed governments. In Egypt, the British allowed a greater measure of independence for the local government than before the war. But during the interwar period, British officials worked to keep all the political groups divided and thus incapable of threatening the British position. Saudi Arabian leaders spent the interwar years establishing a government that would span much of the Arabian Peninsula.

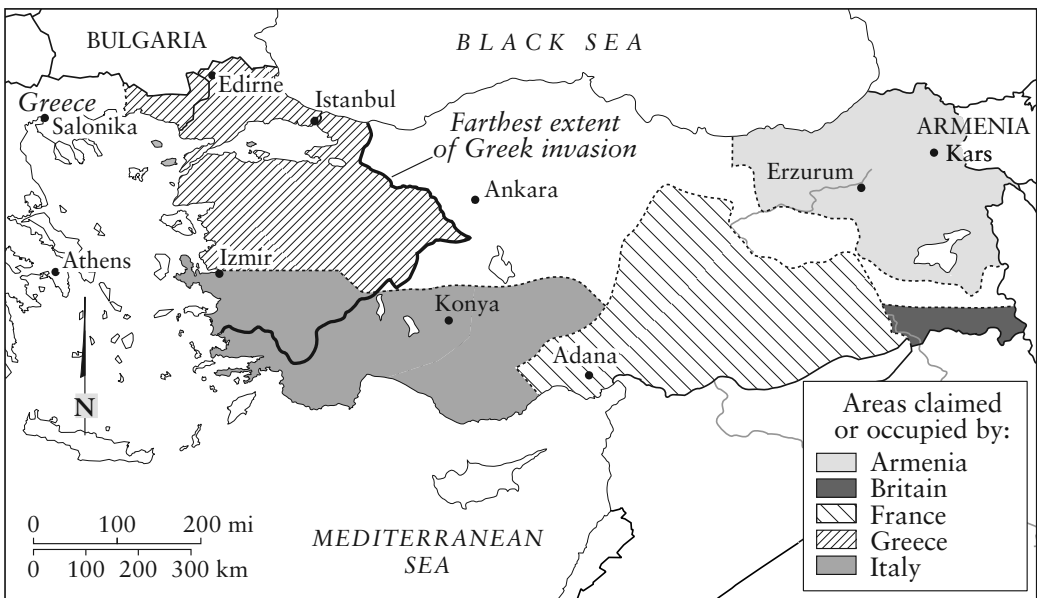
Across the region, new institutions of state brought increasing numbers of people into government orbit as civil servants, police and military forces,

students, and tax payers. The problem of determining what would be a proper type of leadership for the new state and what type of government to form within it was not, however, resolved. New rebellions continued to break out throughout the decade and again in the 1930s as a result of the continuing divisions between those who had acquired and those who were excluded from positions of influence. The processes by which state formation between 1918 and the early 1930s took place in Turkey, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Transjordan, and Saudi Arabia illustrate these phenomena.

Rebellion and State Construction in Turkey

As the empire faced defeat in fall 1918, Ottoman CUP leaders fled the country, leaving a vacuum for junior-level CUP officials to form the Renovation Party. The Entente Libérale Party reemerged from underground, and one of its members, Ferid Pasha, served as grand vizier in five cabinets between March 1919 and October 1920. Sultan Mehmet VI sat on the Ottoman throne, succeeding Sultan Mehmet V, who had died a few months before the war ended. Together, these groups enabled the Ottoman government to continue to rule for the next few years. This government also signed the Treaty of Sèvres, which laid out arrangements for a postwar territorial settlement for the empire. Its provisions formally separated the Arab provinces from Ottoman control and granted the Kurds autonomy and the Armenians independence in the regions they

MAP 14.
Spheres of
Influence and
Occupation in
Anatolia in 1919.



dominated in Anatolia. The Ottoman government agreed to pay indemnities for the war, continue servicing the Ottoman debt, and maintain the low tariff duties contained within the old Capitulation treaties. France, Britain, Greece, and Italy all received the right to maintain the spheres of influence they had already established in Anatolia and Thrace.

While this government negotiated on the world stage concerning the division of the empire in the aftermath of the war, at home it struggled to regain direct control over an Anatolia that continued to be a national battleground for Turks, Armenians, and Kurds. Unlike the conflicts that had erupted since the late 19th century, now Greeks and Europeans also sought to control parts of the territory. The Treaty of Sèvres had delineated special zones for the Europeans as well as the Greeks, Kurds, and Armenians, making the division of the territory an international concern.

Defense of National Rights Societies

Because Istanbul has little effective control over Anatolia after the war, local Turkish groups calling themselves the Defense of National Rights Societies formed militias to defend their territories from the Europeans and from Armenians and Kurds who were being promised lands these Turks considered their national homeland. Local notables, former Ottoman army officers, ulama, and lower-level CUP leaders took advantage of the breakdown in governance to take command of their local regions. Although each society worked in only a small sector of Anatolia, so many groups were working in parallel that they were essentially forming a nationwide defense movement for the Turks of Anatolia.

Grand National Assembly

The sultan's government tried to organize a military force capable of defeating these societies by sending Mustafa Kemal, a hero of the Gallipoli campaign of 1916, as one of the officers. Instead of fighting against the Turkish societies, Kemal landed in Anatolia at the port of Samsun on May 19, 1919, and pledged to lead the Turks to independence. In July 1919, many of the societies' leaders met in a congress in Erzurum to coordinate their military activities against the Istanbul government. Kemal resigned his Ottoman military commission and took on chairmanship of the congress. Between September 4 and 11, 1919, a second congress met in Sivas, close to central Anatolia, and passed a series of resolutions collectively known as the National Pact. They declared that the Ottoman Arab provinces should hold plebiscites to determine sovereignty over their territo-

ries but that all other provinces within Anatolia and around Istanbul were indivisibly Turkish. This group constituted itself as the Grand National Assembly (GNA) on April 23, 1920, marking the moment when Turkey had two governments: one in Istanbul and one in Ankara.

Even with much popular enthusiasm for this government in Ankara, opposition arose as well, making its birth a difficult one, indicating that the GNA still had to gain legitimacy as the leading organization for Turkish defense. The national defense societies had from the beginning been independent organizations with very local concerns. A number had been included in the congresses, but many had been left out and resented the loss of power to the new government. Disparate rebels fought not only to maintain sovereignty over what they considered Turkish land but also to defend their own local hegemony. To discourage opposition, the GNA asserted that it had the legitimate right to punish even Turks who refused to accede to its authority. In summer 1920 a civil war broke out throughout Anatolia as recalcitrant rebels fought against the strictures being imposed on them from Ankara.

During late fall 1920 and into winter 1921, the GNA passed a series of laws designed to bring the rebels into line. One of the most influential was the Law on Fugitives, which required the GNA to punish deserters from the new national army. Another important measure was establishment of the Independence Tribunals, whose purpose was to put on trial anyone accused of treason against Ankara. Both legal strategies proved successful in defeating the rebellious societies, enabling the GNA to consolidate the disparate local forces into a new national army. In a further effort to establish its legitimacy, the GNA drafted the first constitution for republican Turkey—the Fundamental Law—and adopted it on January 20, 1921. It delineated the powers accorded the president and the assembly, while affirming the Turkish people's sovereignty over the government.

Turkish Military Victories

While battling the rebellious national defense societies and acquiring legitimacy by enacting a constitution for a new Turkish government, Kemal and the GNA turned their attention to the European powers occupying Turkish land and to the Kurds and Armenians, still struggling against the Turks as they had for decades. Throughout 1920, Turkish nationalist troops attacked the French position in southwestern Anatolia and forced the French to gradually retreat. Fighting against the French in the Battle of Marash in early 1920, the GNA massacred thousands of Armenians

whom the French had repatriated after World War I and forced thousands more to flee, sending them into exile again. In October 1921, the GNA and the French government ratified the Ankara Agreement, which detailed the final French withdrawal from the region. Having also won a military victory over groups of rebellious Kurds, the Ankara government succeeded in destroying any possibility of an Armenian or Kurdish state in Anatolia in the 1920s. The competition for Anatolia that had begun in the late 19th century with the rise of Turkish, Kurdish, and Armenian national identities had ended with a victory for the Turks. The events of the war and the subsequent expulsion from Marash had forced almost all Armenians out of Anatolia. The centralizing Turkish state overpowered Kurdish efforts to rebel in the 1920s and 1930s.

The Ankara Turks then began an attack against the Greeks who had taken control over the western Anatolia coast in the aftermath of the war. The GNA rallied forces throughout Anatolia in defense of Turkish national land. In July 1922, the GNA army began its offensive against the Greeks in Izmir and succeeded in ending the occupation of the city and the surrounding province. The Mudanya Armistice was signed on September 11, 1922. The city of Izmir went up in flames during the campaign, thousands died in the fighting, and one million Greeks and half a million Turks were exchanged between Greek and Turkish lands.

Treaty of Lausanne

After taking full control of Anatolia, Kemal and the GNA brought the European powers back to the negotiating table. In the subsequent Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, the European spheres of influence were officially dismantled, and the signers recognized Turkish sovereignty over all territory under direct GNA control. The treaty also canceled the World War I debt and abolished the Capitulation treaties, but it maintained low import tariff duties until 1929 and required that the Turkish Republic pay a portion of the Ottoman public debt beginning in 1929. The Kurds and the Armenians lost their autonomous status and became Turkish citizens with special protections afforded them as minorities. The GNA followed ratification of the Lausanne Treaty with the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923. This new Turkish government had already abolished the Ottoman sultanate in 1922; on March 3, 1924, the GNA did the same for the caliphate and, with it, the last remaining authority of the Ottoman ruling family. Mustafa Kemal had harnessed a fragmented rebellion and transformed it into a Turkish War of Liberation to reclaim territorial



FIGURE 5.1. Turkish president Mustafa Kemal and his wife, Latife Hanım, 1923.

control over Anatolia. In the process, he secured international and domestic recognition for his particular leadership over the new Turkish state.

Authoritarianism in Turkey

From his position as president, Kemal pushed a series of laws through the Turkish parliament in the 1920s establishing institutions of state charged with disseminating his agenda throughout the country. Thus, Kemal defined an overarching identity for the Turkish Republic that would subsume religion under state control and look to the West for guidance on future political and cultural decisions. In place of the Ottoman identity that applauded cosmopolitanism and a centuries-long religious tolerance, Kemal substituted a new Turkish identity that harked back to the pre-Ottoman era of Turkic migrations and celebrated the distinctiveness of the Turkish language, culture, and history.

Legislation for Turkish Modernization

On March 3, 1924, the Turkish parliament passed the Law for the Unification of Education, which declared that henceforth all schools would be secular with the exception of a few Islamic Imam-Hatip schools and the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Istanbul. A month later, on April 8, the GNA abolished the shari'a courts; on November 30, 1925, it abolished all Sufi orders. The government adopted the Gregorian calendar in the place of the Islamic calendar on January 1, 1926. Over the next few months, the GNA voted to implement the Swiss Civil Code, the Italian Penal Code, and elements of the German and Italian Commercial Codes in the place of the shari'a and the Ottoman Mecelle. On November 1, 1928, the government declared that a new Turkish language, with Latin letters, would replace the Arabic alphabet beginning in 1929. Kemal used the new Republican People's Party (RPP), founded in August 1923, as his primary vehicle for these changes. In 1935, the RPP passed a resolution formally uniting state and party as one, making the decisions of one identical to the policies of the other. In 1934, the state had abolished the old titles of effendi and bey for men and hanım for women; in the same year, all citizens were required to select surnames, having for centuries used honorifics, fathers' names, occupations, and locales as monikers. Parliament bestowed on Kemal the surname Atatürk (father of the Turks), and he served as president with that name until his death in 1938.

Kemal capitalized on his triumphant leadership during the War of Liberation to push through radical and often contentious policies. He also

took advantage of the fact that many of the Ottoman empire's elites had been discredited by the World War I defeat. Since Anatolia was made up of largely medium to small landowners, he did not have to contend with a powerful cadre of large landowners. In appointing the top officials for his government, Kemal favored the close advisers he had acquired from the War of Liberation. The vast majority of the national defense society leaders achieved a measure of local influence in the new provincial governments of Anatolia, but they did not have access to the halls of government in Ankara. Kemal also elevated to influential positions the Westernized partisans, such as administrators and professionals, who valued the modernization program he instituted and wanted to serve as its implementers.

The Six Principles of Kemalism

In 1931, at the Third Party Congress of the RPP, Kemal laid out the six principles of what became the cornerstone of Kemalism: republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism, and reformism. Republicanism rejected the monarchical Ottoman model and ushered in elements of popular sovereignty; nationalism integrated Turkish identity with Kemal's program; populism called for a wholesale mobilization of the population to accomplish state-defined projects; and statism identified the state as the leading investor in the economy. Kemalist secularism was in line with the tenets of the French concept of laicism by allowing for the practice of religion in private society but state control over its institutions in the public realm. Reformism encompassed all the changes that Kemal was initiating in Turkey. These elements became the backbone of Article 2 of the revised constitution of February 5, 1937.

The six elements of Kemalism defined a specific Turkish identity that differentiated the new Turks from the old Ottomans. This new polity could not completely divorce itself from its Ottoman legacy, but the institutions of republican Turkey were distinguished by being modern, uniquely Turkish, and reflective of Kemal's personal vision. The language reform measure is a good example of how this break with the Ottoman past was achieved. Not only was the alphabet changed but the Turkish Language Society as of 1932 took on the task of formulating a national language by eliminating Arabic and Persian words, finding Turkish substitutes, and inventing new words when no equivalents could be identified. In addition to the education provided in the expanding state school system, the state made available special classes for Turkish citizens of all ages to learn to read only the modern version of Turkish, with its Latin

alphabet and its reformed vocabulary. Ottoman documents and records became inaccessible to the new generation of Turks as knowledge of Ottoman Turkish disappeared. The other new institutions of the 1920s may not have created such a clear-cut break with the past but still alienated the partisans of past institutions and brought in those beholden to Kemal, to the new republican Turkey, and to his combined vision for Turkishness and modernity.

Turkish National Narrative

The state recruited the Turkish Historical Society, which had been founded in 1931, to propose a scientifically sound thesis that explained the roots of Turkish history. Out of this work came the Turkish History Thesis, which highlighted the fact that Turks had migrated out of Central Asia long before the emergence of the Ottoman Empire. It was these early Turkish migrants who brought civilization to the peoples of China, India, the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans, and parts of Europe. The affiliated Sun Language Theory stated that all these immigrants spoke an ancient form of Turkish, which contributed words to every language in the regions where Turks migrated. The Turkish Republic used these theories to subordinate its Ottoman past; they revealed that Turkish accomplishments predated the empire and represented a more lasting legacy. To disseminate this Turkish patriotic message, the RPP opened adult education centers called People's Houses and People's Rooms to bring movies, plays, libraries, dances, and schools to provincial towns so that the Turkish nationalist narrative could be understood and embraced by the population.

But even with these new institutions, along with their comprehensive ideology of nationalism and modernity, Kemal faced obstacles in embedding them into Turkish society in the interwar period. His government had acquired important new stakeholders, but there were many who had no voice in its decisions. The years after 1918 had brought many people out in support of defending Turks and their national claims, but by the 1920s, Mustafa Kemal was using the new state to curtail independent action by those same local leaders while imposing new regulations about how to live within his modern Turkish state.

Village Law

The Village Law, passed by parliament on March 8, 1924, was intended to modernize and standardize the villages of the country by requiring vil-

lages and villagers to fulfill a list of mandates. The list included the call to eliminate pools of standing water in the village, build a central water fountain, clean the village water supply, separate the living quarters of houses from their barns by a wall, and build covered toilets for every house. In addition, villages were supposed to build two roads that would run through the center of the community, inaugurate a Village Council room, build a school, and prohibit overloading an animal with a burden larger than it could carry.

Almost none of these mandates were carried out in the villages because the state lacked the resources to underwrite the expense, and the villages themselves could not afford it. Furthermore village leaders had no special ability or desire to bring about such reforms, nor did the central government expend many resources explaining the practical benefits the villages would accrue from these reforms. Vested groups such as the village leaders opposed the innovations, believing they would change the balance of power and weaken their positions. The villages tried to collect the taxes, fines, duties, and fees and supply the *corvée* labor the law required, but accomplishing these feats was just as difficult as it had been under the Ottomans. Even if all the taxes had been collected, the revenue would not have been enough to pay for the state-required projects. In this and similar cases, Kemal's popularity could not offset the government's lack of resources or its failure to deploy the extensive education efforts necessary to gain support for government policies.

Women's Rights

In another example of how the project of modernity under the Turkish Republic came up against societal obstacles, Mustafa Kemal tried to secure new legal rights for women, but he found here, too, that he had a dearth of stakeholders supporting his policies and a lack of institutional resources for their implementation.

Kemal focused particularly on legal and administrative reforms that would bring women out into the public sphere. On February 17, 1926, the Turkish parliament passed the Turkish Civil Code, overturning established *shari'a* precepts by making polygamy illegal, giving equal rights of divorce to men and women, granting custody of children to both parents, allowing equal inheritance to both men and women, according equal weight to testimony from men and women, and raising the legal age for marriage. In April 1930, Kemal's government passed a bill granting women the right to vote in municipal elections. Women did so for the

first time in 1933. In December 1934, parliament voted unanimously to allow women to vote and run for candidacy to the parliament; in February 1935, 18 women won election.

While these measures granted women a degree of legal equality they had never had under the Ottomans, they did not immediately change most women's lives. Stakeholders in this project, members of the professional middle stratum who had already begun the process of Westernizing, observed the new code. Some attended international women's conferences to extol Turkish progress on women's issues. Villagers, however, largely ignored the laws, such as those regarding registration of marriages, because the process typically necessitated traveling to large administrative centers and spending time away from the farm or artisan shop. Also, birth records and medical certificates required to register marriages were hard to obtain in most areas. The Swiss Law Code on which Turkey's was modeled did not unconditionally support

WOMEN'S OPPORTUNITIES IN THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

In the Ottoman Empire, women and state leaders had already begun establishing institutions to address modern concerns about women. The 19th-century Ottoman school expansion program included schools for girls, although they were built at a slower rate than those for boys. A teacher's training college for women opened in 1863; in 1875, American missionaries opened the American College for Girls in Istanbul. The state made elementary education compulsory for girls in 1913 and opened a women's university in 1915. It merged with Istanbul University in 1920.

Between the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and the beginning of World War I, women formed organizations to advance their cause: the Red-White Club, Association for the Betterment of Women, Ottoman Society for Women, and Ottoman Association for the Defense of Women's Rights, as well as the journal *Women's World*.

During World War I, the loss of male workers to the battlefields created job openings for women, and women's wage labor increased

dramatically. Many Muslim women joined Christian and Jewish women who had long been working on the factory floor. During and immediately after the war, more than 20,000 women of all faiths became workers in food and ammunition factories and increased their representation in textile factories. Thousands more worked in banks, the postal services, and municipal administrations; still others volunteered to provide support along the battlefronts. The Islamic Society to Promote the Employment of Ottoman Women was founded in 1916 to aid these new workers, and a Women Merchants' Bazaar opened in Istanbul to aid small merchants. The years immediately after the collapse of the empire provided even more opportunities for women. As the war wound down, the Faculty of Philosophy opened courses for women. By 1921, not only could girls attend school in coeducational classrooms, but they could remove their veils during lectures. In 1922, Turkey's first female doctor established a clinic in Istanbul.

equal status for women. Men were still the legal heads of households, so women needed to be given permission from their husbands to work outside the home.

Even though these changes had been advocated and supported by the women who for decades had led the struggle for women's rights, Kemal subsumed their organizations within the larger modernizing and nationalizing project he was undertaking. Members of the independent Turkish Women's Union, founded in the 1920s, had enthusiastically supported his new policies, but Kemal dissolved the organization in mid-1935, declaring that it had achieved its goal of establishing political rights for women and was thus no longer necessary. Not even the women who were stakeholders in this process of reform and modernization were allowed to decide policy on their own issues. The Kemalist project was directed by dictates from the top; citizens were merely implementers.

Turkish Exclusivity

Kemal's exaltation of the particularly Turkish identity of his new state engendered complications for the non-Turks living within its borders, especially for those who had been in competition for Anatolian land. The Armenians who still remained in Turkey, including about 120,000 residents in Istanbul, received Turkish citizenship but faced prejudice because they did not meet all the criteria for citizenship in Kemal's republic. The definition of Turkish citizenship laid down in the 1924 constitution stated only that all the people of Turkey would receive citizenship regardless of religion and race. While providing an expansive definition for citizenship, this wording was sufficiently vague that the state was able to pass subsequent laws that discriminated against those who were not Muslim and did not speak Turkish as a mother tongue, adopt Turkish culture, and accept the ideals of Turkishness.

Minorities who did not fill all these criteria, such as the Armenians, received basic citizenship rights such as the right to vote and receive a passport but faced obstacles in other public realms. For example, in the 1920s the state passed laws privileging job seekers who had fought in the War of Liberation, specifically excluding Armenians who had been targets of Turkish military policies. The result was the mass firing of non-Turks, especially Armenians, from positions in the state bureaucracy and state-owned businesses in the 1920s. Nonetheless, Armenians did adapt to their new circumstances in the interwar period by finding ways to integrate

publicly—by speaking only Turkish in public venues, for instance—while maintaining their traditions, religion, and language in private.

Kurdish Rebellions

Kurds also encountered difficulties as a result of Mustafa Kemal's designs for a newly defined Turkish identity. Although Kurdish leaders had agitated for autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, they remained loyal to the government throughout World War I in the hope that an expansive Ottomanism would respect their national identity. After the war, the Treaty of Sèvres, with its promise of regional autonomy, had given hope to the Kurdish nationalists. However, when the Treaty of Lausanne withdrew the promise and Kurds found themselves increasingly controlled by the centralizing Turkish state, they rebelled.

The issue of Kurdish citizenship was almost as fraught as it was for Armenians. In the new Kemalist national equation, Kurds represented Turks-in-the-making, or "mountain Turks," who could be fit into the Turkish historical lineage but needed guidance to become full-fledged Turks. Kurdish groups did not accept this designation and revolted at least 13 separate times between 1925 and 1930 alone. Their leaders frequently failed to coordinate their actions, which caused a good deal of fragmentation between different groups, but the repeated rebellions forced Ankara to expend great resources to subdue them. They also proved that Kurds would not easily be dismissed as inferior Turks.

The largest of the early revolts of the 1920s was led by the Sufi Shaykh Said of Piran in collaboration with a number of the tribal shaykhs in southeastern Anatolia and the urban-based Azadi (Freedom) Committee, which comprised intellectuals and professionals. Beginning in February 1925, the Turkish government sent 50,000 troops to crush the revolt, and in the ensuing battles, the leaders were killed and the uneasy alliance between tribal leaders, urban intellectuals, and a Sufi shaykh broke apart. In the following years, as smaller revolts flared, the Ankara government created a special legal structure for the Kurdish-dominated districts of southeastern Anatolia, with each district led by an Inspectorate-General vested with extensive powers. Each Inspectorate was granted funds for roads, schools, and police and administrative offices, all of which would help the central government in Ankara subdue the regions and bring the populations and resources under direct state control.

The largest Kurdish military revolt erupted between 1936 and 1938, when the Shi'i Alevi Kurds of Dersim rebelled once again. The Alevi

had previously revolted in 1921 against the newly formed Ankara government but had been defeated. They remained quiet until the Turkish government announced in January 1936 that it had established a Fourth Inspectorate-General, this one for the region of Dersim. This Inspectorate-General began building roads and introducing Turkish state institutions into the region. Instead of accommodating this incursion, Dersim's tribes coordinated with a cadre of Kurdish urban intellectuals to oppose government efforts. The revolt began with a Kurdish military unit blowing up a bridge and attacking a party of Turkish officers in the spring of 1937.

The government moved 25,000 soldiers and 20 warplanes into the district and bombarded the Kurdish camps. However, the ongoing problem the government faced in its attempts to extend its reach was the lack of serviceable roads. This was particularly problematic in terrain as mountainous as that in southeastern Anatolia. Due to their inaccessibility, the Kurdish rebels were able to protect themselves from a frontal assault by the Turkish military. The Turkish government ultimately defeated the rebels by October 1938 by instituting a siege of the region and preventing food and supplies from entering. The government eventually succeeded in imposing the Inspectorate on Dersim and with it a strong measure of state control. However, the government was not able to put an end to Kurdish demands for national rights. Although the next few decades witnessed no new rebellions seriously threatening Turkish sovereignty, the

ALEVI

Alevi are the descendants of the Qizilbash tribes who served as the military force enabling the Safavid conquest of Iran in 1501. In the aftermath of their victory, Qizilbash tribesmen found themselves marginalized when the shahs established a centralized administration with Persian administrators and Shi'i clerics in the top positions. Instead of submitting to Safavid control, the Qizilbash retreated to Azerbaijan and took advantage of their position along the frontier between the Ottoman and Safavid Empires to maintain a great deal of independence. Neither empire had the military force to subdue

all the tribes or conquer the territory they controlled, so the Qizilbash did not have to conform to either the Sunni or the Shi'i orthodoxies that the sultans and shahs endorsed. In this marginal zone, the Qizilbash maintained their heterodox belief systems. Once the name Qizilbash had become a liability, those who settled in Turkey took the name Alevi, and followers came from both Turkish and Kurdish communities. Their belief system combined Shi'i Islam with elements of Sufism. Eventually they closed the faith to anyone not born into an Alevi family as a means of protecting Alevi from persecution.

issue of Kurdish nationality within the larger Turkish polity had not been resolved, and later in the century Kurds again organized and rebelled.

Rebellion and State Construction in Iran

During and immediately after World War I, Qajar princes, tribal leaders, and religious clerics took advantage of the Qajar government's weakness to assert their political autonomy. A revolt in the northern province of Azerbaijan erupted immediately after the war ended, led by disparate groups of Turkic Azeris, Armenians, and local tribal forces, with the first two largely working through the local Communist Party with aid from the newly formed Soviet Union. Whereas the princes, shaykhs, and clerics sought to reconfirm the positions they had held leading up to and throughout the war, many rebels in the north were calling for a new kind of Iranian state that would incorporate elements of socialism and communism.

Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919

British officials tried to counter this fragmentation by strengthening Ahmad Shah's government in Tehran and thus solidifying their position as the dominant foreign power in the country. The Anglo-Iranian Agreement of 1919 offered the Qajar government a £2 million loan if it would grant the British a monopoly on the supply of arms, military training, and administrative advisers to the state. What the British wanted was continuing control over and access to Iranian oil; the shah needed the resources necessary for rebuilding Iran after years of warfare. The Qajar prime minister signed the treaty, but the majles refused to ratify it. Nonetheless, British officials assigned to Iran acted as if the treaty stood in force and began implementing its provisions.

Reza Khan and Sayyed Ziya' Tabataba'i

Out of the jockeying for local and national power, Reza Khan of the Cossack Brigade emerged as a new leader by marching 3,000 men from Qazvin near the Caspian Sea to take control of Tehran in early 1921. En route, he made an alliance with newspaper editor Sayyed Ziya' Tabataba'i, and the two orchestrated a bloodless coup against the Qajar government on February 2, 1921. The shah surrendered to the superior forces of Reza Khan and Tabataba'i without a fight. The shah was allowed to remain on his throne but had no access to real power. Tabataba'i became the new prime minister. Reza Khan, who served in the new position of army commander, established the foundation for a

regular national army by merging the Cossacks with the gendarmerie. With this army, he gained control over one autonomous province after another during the 1920s and ended the fragmentation that had accompanied the events of World War I. He succeeded because he built on the centralization efforts of the Qajars, however incomplete they had been, and because he used his army to defeat the strongest of the princes and shaykhs who had reasserted their provincial autonomy during and after the war. The consolidation of power gave Reza Khan the leverage to abrogate the Anglo-Iranian Agreement and sign a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union. Once the Soviet troops had withdrawn from Azerbaijan according to the terms of the treaty, Reza Khan had the requisite might to crush the rebellion there.

Constituent Assembly

Reza Khan used his military success to push Tabataba'i from power in May 1921 and began the process of acquiring allies for his bid to overthrow the Qajar shah. Even though his methods were authoritarian, he attracted a wide range of supporters because he was securing and centralizing the country, encouraging trade to flow. Among the conservative forces, large landowners and merchants favored the extra security his army provided; liberal Westernizing reformers saw in him the means by which the Iranian government could modernize. Even the bazaaris and the Shi'a ulama could find value in a leader who had reduced British and Soviet encroachment, just as they had so recently struggled to do. With this support behind him, Reza Shah convened a Constituent Assembly to examine the state's constitution. On April 26, 1926, the Assembly amended the constitution to end the Qajar dynasty and grant Reza Khan the title shah-in-shah. Ahmad Shah, the last Qajar ruler, had already left the country months before the vote; the day after, the crown prince followed. Reza Shah adopted the family name Pahlavi, an old Iranian name associated with pre-Islamic Persia, as a way to further legitimize his leadership over Iran.

Authoritarianism in Iran

Reza Shah established an authoritarian state with himself at the center using three key pillars of control: the army, the state bureaucracy, and the power he wielded over court patronage. By undermining local autonomy, he gained control over taxes he could use as revenues to build up his military and bureaucracy; his power over state offices translated



FIGURE 5.2. Reza Shah Pahlavi sitting on his new throne in Tehran, 1925.

into resources he could dispense as patronage. He confiscated land from all his opponents, making himself the largest landowner in the country and enriching his supply of resources with which to reward supporters. Reza Shah defeated tribal insurgencies, and by the mid-1930s his bureaucracy had managed to take on the tasks of the prior regime's provincial governors. His state and military effectively reached into every corner of the country, ending the endemic Iranian geographic and political fragmentation. Reza Shah's state attracted stakeholders from among the Qajar elites willing to work within the new political system, students and civil servants gaining new training and positions within the expanded state, and others who had been elevated by their personal relationships with Reza Shah.

Military Focus

The military, the cornerstone of Reza Shah's modernizing and centralizing project, increased its ranks from 40,000 in 1926 to 130,000 in 1941. To gain the support of its officer corps, Reza Shah spent the bulk of state revenue on the modernization and upkeep of the army and its small air force and navy. Officers received salaries far higher than those of civilian officials and were able to buy land at lower-than-market prices and gain access to special royal clubs and casinos. Reza Shah dressed in military uniform for public events to show his leadership of and solidarity with the military, and he organized every branch of the government according to a military system of hierarchy and discipline. Reza Shah established clear-cut divisions between the different ministries and distinct job descriptions within them, a task the Qajars had failed to complete. In 1926, a new civil service law was passed that defined employment ranks according to educational qualifications, declaring that positions and promotion would be determined, at least on paper, by merit rather than nepotism. By 1941, some 90,000 civil servants worked in the government, employing the vast majority of graduates from the secondary and higher educational institutions in the country. In a further social engineering project, the state eliminated all the old royal titles such as *mirza* to blur the divisions between the strata of society.

Legislation for Iranian Modernization

As was occurring in Turkey, Reza Shah worked to weaken the influence that the *shari'a* and thus the Shi'i clerics could have over the population. He passed into law the Commercial Code in 1925, an Italian-

influenced Criminal Code in 1926, and the French-influenced Civil Code in 1928 that took legal and family issues out of the realm of shari'a law and placed it within a secular court system. The state went further in 1939–1940 by abolishing the shari'a courts completely so the ulama would no longer have a judicial role over Iranian citizens. From that point forward, only judges trained to adjudicate the new law codes could preside over the courts. Secular schools replaced many of the old religious schools, starting especially in 1926 when the majles voted to spend a portion of land-tax receipts on building up a secular elementary school system.

In 1929, the state decreed that all men in state office except the ulama must wear Western dress. Rather than sponsor Shi'i religious ceremonies such as the passion plays reenacting the betrayal of the Prophet's grandson Hussein, Reza Shah made his own birthday the focus of national celebrations. In this way, he linked his reign to the illustrious lineage of Persian monarchs, whose power source was temporal, not spiritual. In 1931, Reza Shah ended the right of theological students to avoid military conscription. As a final step in breaking down the independent power of the ulama, in 1939 the state took over collection and management of the religious endowments, the waqf.

In his project to modernize Iran following Western models, Reza Shah relied more on force than persuasion. Although the reforms did create new stakeholders, more members of the population were not brought into the new culture. The peasants were deprived of much of their land during the interwar period, and the ulama lost control of many of their traditional institutions.

Women's Rights

Reza Shah's modernity program, like Kemal's, expanded women's rights but eliminated their political organizations. The Patriotic Women's League had been founded in 1922, and the women activists working within it stood in the vanguard calling for political and economic rights for women. In the 1930s, Reza Shah opened the doors of the University of Tehran to women. In 1936, he prohibited women from wearing the veil in public. Both of these steps were supported by the activists in the Patriotic Women's League, yet after passing this legislation, Reza Shah shut down the league and allowed no women's organizations to exist outside state control. Furthermore, his secular law codes did little to improve women's legal position in society. For example, the Civil Code of 1936

endorsed polygamy, gave the right of divorce and custody of children to men, and prohibited women from traveling or entering educational and employment venues without their husbands' permission.

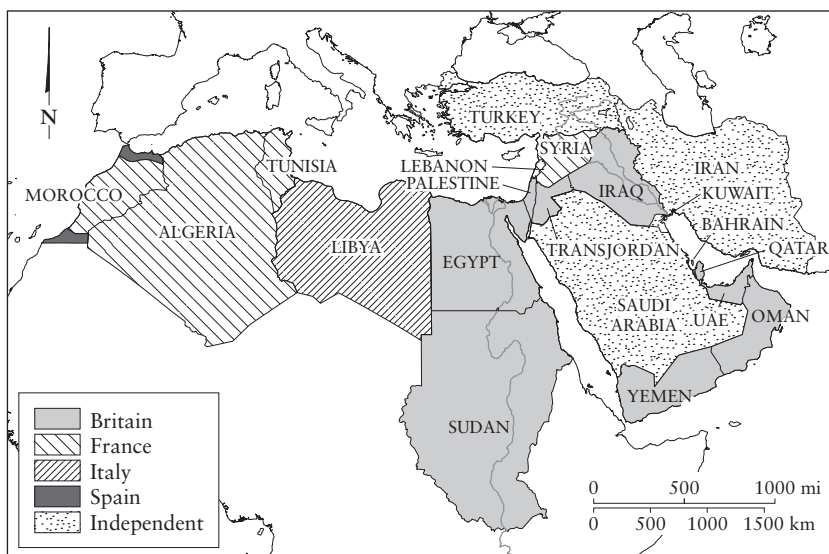
Similarities and Differences between Turkey and Iran

In the interwar period, both Reza Shah and Mustafa Kemal tried to impose on their states a top-down modernization and nationalizing project. Neither succeeded in fully controlling all the players and resources within their countries, but both established the groundwork for their successors to continue the process. Mustafa Kemal was able to rally stakeholders with the positions he offered them in the new state structure, and he attracted loyalty because of his unrivaled prestige as the preeminent leader defending Turkish rights. The Republic of Turkey could build on a century of change because the reforms of the Ottoman Empire had extended new kinds of state institutions across the territory the modern state claimed and had gained acceptance from many stakeholders in the society about the need for such reforms. As the Ottoman Empire gave way to republican Turkey, these same societal elements supported the new kinds of institutions Kemal was building. Kemal encountered obstacles when he shifted his focus away from Turkish national defense and pursued a policy of forced modernization. Projects for modernizing villages and schools met with opposition from local leaders wary of losing their influence and incapable of raising sufficient resources for their implementation. In imposing a specifically Turkish identity on the state, he antagonized the Kurds, who fought to determine their own kind of state in southeastern Anatolia.

Reza Shah could not rely on popular appeal to win supporters for his program. Because of the fragmented nature of state building under Qajar rule, he had to construct anew many of the central and provincial state institutions that had already been functioning in the Ottoman Empire before Kemal's arrival. Reza Shah had also not earned the national military acclaim that allowed Mustafa Kemal to push through policies that would otherwise generate sustained opposition. He depended heavily on force to remove opponents and to exploit all available resources. Although he largely succeeded in eliminating the old autonomous zones, he had difficulty building up sufficient numbers of stakeholders. Most of the population saw only the heavy hand of the state since few services emanated from the capital and few benefits compensated for the increasing number of obligations imposed by Tehran.

MAP 15.

Colonial Control and Territorial Division of the Middle East after World War I. The British and French Mandate and colonies covered most of the Arab world, and Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia became independent.



Rebellion and State Construction in Syria and Lebanon

When Emir Faysal entered Damascus on October 1, 1918, and inaugurated an Arab-led and British-financed government, he ruled it as part of the British-controlled OETA-East (Occupied Enemy Territory Administration) over modern-day Syria and Jordan. He appointed to the top posts officers who had fought alongside him in the Arab Revolt, collectively known as the Sharifian officers. The residents of Damascus and the Arab nationalists among them had been wary of his devotion to the Arab nationalist cause at the beginning of World War I, but his exploits during the war proved his Arab bona fides. Upon arrival in the city, Emir Faysal immediately received the support of the Arab Club, al-Fatat, and the Arab Independence Party, all of which were staffed by young Arab nationalists of the Western-educated and professional sectors. To bring people into the Faysali state project, these organizations repeatedly mobilized urban residents for marches and demonstrations in support of Emir Faysal and his government. On March 8, 1920, at the General Syrian Congress, these supporters declared Faysal the king of Syria.

The congress may have backed him in 1920, but King Faysal's governmental control was disintegrating by that time because of economic and administrative weaknesses and the clear French desire for colonial domination over Syria as expressed in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The economy was in dire straits after the war, and the succeeding years produced poor harvests; the diminishing value of the British-imposed Egyp-

tian pound forced merchants and farmers to revert to Ottoman gold when available and to barter when it was not. Outside the cities, brigandage along the roads made it difficult to transport food and goods from rural to urban areas, exacerbating food shortages and raising prices for all products. Tax collection proved difficult because King Faysal had little in the way of a governmental apparatus outside the cities. Exacerbating his difficulties, King Faysal failed to assign specific duties to each of his officials, so there were no clear-cut chains of authority for implementing orders that issued from his office and little effective governance.

Despite these problems, the system worked, albeit in an ad hoc fashion, until the British began curtailing funds for King Faysal's government in early 1920. Notwithstanding this added financial pressure, the government refused French aid because of the country's colonial designs on Syria. When the British began a pullout of troops in early 1920 and the French approached from Beirut, King Faysal sought support for Syrian

SHARIFIANS

The Sharifians were Arab officers from the Ottoman army trained in the new military academies opened by the sultans in the 19th century. A small percentage of the graduates continued their training at the War College in Istanbul. Lower-class Sunni Muslim students predominated because enrollment was free and study at the military academies provided social mobility. On the eve of World War I, about 1,200 Iraqis had graduated from the War College and become lieutenants in the Ottoman army, making up the largest contingent of Arab officers. About 15 percent of all officers were from the Arab provinces.

Some of these men supported Arab nationalism on the eve of World War I and opposed the authoritarian structure of the Young Turk government. They joined secret Arab nationalism societies in Baghdad, such as al-'Ahd (the Covenant), to discuss how Arabs could gain independence or political autonomy from Istanbul. However, the majority remained loyal to the

Ottoman government throughout the war. When it became apparent by 1917 that the Ottoman Empire would lose the war, many army deserters returned home rather than join the Arab Revolt. Their long years of training and integration with soldiers and officers from every region of the empire provided them with an institutional loyalty that proved stronger than anything arising from a new Arab national identification.

A few army deserters did join the Arab Revolt army; another group joined after Faysal successfully entered Damascus in October 1918 and established an Arab government. The largest number chose enlistment with the Arab Revolt army as a path out of British prisoner-of-war camps. Those who fought alongside Faysal during the war and served him in Iraq received powerful political positions as a reward. Sharifians held top posts in the government throughout the interwar period; Nuri al-Sa'id, the most influential of them, held positions in government until it was overthrown by a military coup in 1958.

independence in the halls of government in Europe, presenting his case at Versailles and spending many months of his tenure lobbying in Europe. Yet support was not forthcoming. The Europeans also ignored the findings of the American-sponsored King-Crane Commission of 1919, which concluded that the majority of Syrian Arabs did not want French colonial control over their country and that Arabs throughout the region opposed Zionist plans for a state in Palestine.

Widespread Opposition

Meanwhile, by 1920 members of the Arab organizations that had worked to mobilize support for King Faysal's government since the beginning of his rule began to turn away, faulting him for failing to defend against French encroachment or resolve any of the country's internal problems. King Faysal also engendered hostility from the old Ottoman notables from the region—the large landowners, big urban merchants, and tribal shaykhs—when he favored the Sharifian officers and leaders of the local Arab organizations for top governmental posts. He had paid the notables regular subsidies from the moment he established his new government so he could placate and pacify them. But he had to cut those subsidies when his government ran into financial crisis; by 1920 their tolerance of his rule turned into active opposition.

Opposition also arose from new groups on the Syrian political scene, including smaller merchants and religious figures who for the most part had not received official positions under the Ottoman reforms but had established their own regional, trade, and family networks. These connections, independent of the Ottoman-supported local notables' range of authority, enabled the participants to sell products, intermarry, and aid each other in times of crisis. Suffering from postwar deprivations and discouraged by King Faysal's failing government, the people living in the popular quarters of the cities established a series of committees and militias to protect their zones of influence and trade routes.

Many called themselves national defense committees, although, as in Turkey, they rarely coordinated their activities across Syria. Different groups did attempt to do so within the Higher National Committee, which first met in February 1920, but the separate leaderships could not agree on a joint structure for working together. Nevertheless, they worked in parallel for the same goals: stopping the French from colonizing Syria while also making the country safe for cultivation, manufacturing, and trade. Tram and railway workers, printers, and workers in glass

and textile factories and the Damascus electric company went on strike to protest the economic and political situation, continuing a pattern that workers had begun as early as the 1870s. These strikes were accompanied by bread riots in the cities. When the state voted conscription into law in December 1919, many of these new activists refused to comply because their local defensive work produced tangible results, and they did not want to divert their efforts for the sake of the Faysali state.

French Invasion

When French general Henri Gouraud marched from Beirut toward Damascus in summer 1920, all militias and opposition groups understood that national defense was at stake. Under this banner, the Faysali state and the national defense committees joined forces. However, the combined forces of Syria could not withstand the French army and were defeated in July 1920 at the Battle of Maysaloun. King Faysal fled to London, and Syria was put under direct French colonial jurisdiction. Within the year, Faysal and many of his Sharifian allies had decamped to Iraq, where the British engineered a plebiscite to make Faysal king.

The French occupied Syria with the imprimatur of the League of Nations. The Covenant of the League of Nations, signed on June 28, 1919, had established the concept of mandates, whereby the Great Powers would mentor former colonies and territories to help them achieve independence. The League of Nations officially designated the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire as class “A” mandates: they were nominally independent but subject to mandatory oversight until they reached political maturity. The League mandate commission charged Britain and France with establishing institutions that would enable the new states to achieve full sovereignty. Top diplomats from Britain, France, Italy, and Japan met at San Remo, Italy, in April 1920 and divided up the Arab world into British and French zones, mostly following the template of the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

French Imposition of the Syria Mandate

France divided the Syria Mandate into provincial segments, strategizing that these divisions would forestall Syrian unification to oppose French rule. Along the coast, France joined the Ottoman mutasarrifate of Mount Lebanon to the province of Beirut and areas of the coastal north and south to create Greater Lebanon. The majority of the Muslim political leaders in these areas opposed the plans for a separate Lebanon because

they supported territorial and state unity between Syria and Lebanon. But with the fall of King Faysal's government and given the French desire to divide the regions within their new mandate, the region's leading Muslim notables failed to persuade the French to consider their desires. The Christian communities, however, largely favored the creation of a separate state for Lebanon and, with Maronite notables taking the lead, worked with the French to keep Lebanon outside the realm of Syrian sovereignty.

On May 23, 1926, Lebanese politicians ratified a constitution for the newly named Lebanese Republic. The Chamber of Deputies and Senate were elected on the basis of sectarian political identification so that each of the country's religious sects received designated numbers of seats in the parliament. The sectarian arrangement hewed to the practices established following the 1860 civil war in Mount Lebanon. The most powerful were those groups who had negotiated positions of influence in the war's aftermath, including the Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslim Arabs, and the Druze, who had regained a measure of influence in the country.

Parliament had little real power, while the French allowed the president authority only over domestic issues. One of the presidential powers was the right to appoint members to the Senate, but the Senate was dissolved by constitutional amendment in 1927, because the existence of an upper and lower house proved to be an ineffective tool for governance in a small country with a sectarian political structure. Henceforth, the president was allowed to appoint a third of the members to the Chamber of Deputies. By the mid-1930s, under pressure from the French high commissioner, it was established that the president of the country would always be a Maronite Christian. Although the French government negotiated a treaty with Lebanon in 1936 to grant it additional independence, the French parliament never ratified the document, so Lebanon remained a French-controlled mandate throughout the interwar period.

For the remaining portions of Syria, French officials continued their divide-and-rule policies by geographically and legally separating the residents from each other. The French initially sought to rule Damascus and Aleppo as separate provinces but found it more efficient to unite them within the state of Syria in 1924; the 'Alawi and Druze received their own autonomous provinces in the northwestern and southern regions, respectively. The bedouin of Syria came under a special administration called the *Contrôle Bédouin*, aimed at sedentarizing the nomads and enlisting the support of tribal shaykhs to serve as government intermediaries. To govern the regions and comply with the rules underlying the mandate

structure, the French high commissioner established representative and federal councils for the different regions of Syria and elevated to positions of influence the original landowning and merchant elite who had been intermediaries under the Ottomans and had formed a key part of the opposition to Faysal's government.

The new system did stabilize under the French, who contributed more funds than King Faysal had been able to access, but the government was perceived as legitimate only by those who held positions within it. Sunni Arab urban notables were back in government service and could use their offices to benefit themselves and their lands, industries, and client networks. As before, in the last decades of Ottoman governance, these notables offered to serve as intermediaries for the French, guaranteeing that their clients served the new state. The French also gave privileged positions to rural notables so they would act as intermediaries throughout the country, providing a loyal bulwark against nationalist agitation in the urban areas. Members of the popular committees who had proved so pivotal in mobilizing much of the population in the postwar period were denied positions in the government because the French eschewed such leadership.

The French also created deeper social divisions by recruiting minorities such as the 'Alawi and Christians into their local military forces—the *Troupes Spéciales* and the *Syrian Gendarmerie*. Troops from their other colonies served in the *Armée du Levant*. As a result of these machinations, the majority Sunni Arab population, excepting the elite cadres, was excluded from participating in the state's governance.

Druze Revolt

Despite their careful calibrations in dividing up Syria and choosing their intermediaries, the French did not prevent unrest from igniting into violence. In 1925 a rebellion broke out in the area of Jabal (Mount) Druze in the Hawran region that encompassed much of the country over the next two years.

The Druze Revolt broke out because of a confluence of factors: high inflation that came with fluctuations in the French franc; high taxation at a time of poor harvests; French *corvée* labor demands imposed on the Druze peasantry; and French refusal to appoint local officials to the autonomous government in Jabal Druze. Sultan al-Atrash, chieftain of the most influential Druze family, became the revolt's leader and easily succeeded in mobilizing hundreds of fighters to stand up to the French and the *Armée du Levant* in the early days of the revolt.



FIGURE 5.3.

After the failure of the Druze Revolt in Syria, Sultan al-Atrash (*seated third from right*) and his retinue found political refuge from French imprisonment in Transjordan. Here they are sitting in a bedouin tent in Wadi Sirhan, near the Transjordanian-Saudi border.

The Druze had never been completely isolated either before the war or after the French established the region as a separate district in 1920; thus, they were able to garner supporters outside the Hawran. Druze shaykhs and peasants had strong ties with the small merchants of the popular quarters of Damascus, many of whom had instigated revolts against King Faysal. During the last years of Ottoman rule these ties had expanded beyond relationships circumscribed by business contracts. For example, when young Druze men attended the Ottoman military secondary school outside Damascus, they often stayed in homes of Damascene merchants who conducted business with Druze shaykhs. These mostly Sunni Arab merchants had long-standing ties to the ulama community, enabling them to extend their networks even farther across the south and into Damascus. Members of these networks had no official power or influence under the Ottomans and the French, but they prospered by cooperating to fur-

ther their familial, societal, and economic interests and mobilizing the popular quarters and allied rural areas against government policies.

When the Druze Revolt erupted in the Hawran, it immediately spread along these unofficial trade and network lines, and the Damascene popular quarters quickly joined in solidarity. Sultan al-Atrash's attempts to recruit support for the revolt from the notables of Damascus proved fruitless in the early months. Many of the notables, their sons, and Western-educated professionals held French colonial government jobs so were beholden to French rule. However, these notables had also formed political parties in the years after the French mandate, disseminating Arab nationalist and anti-imperialist platforms because they also wanted to achieve independence from colonialism. They burnished their nationalist credentials in this way but created the awkward situation of trying to serve two different masters: the French and the nationalists. Caught in this conundrum, Damascene elites refrained from supporting the revolt in the early months, waiting to see how it progressed.

An August 24, 1925, attempt to spread the revolt into Damascus failed in large part because so few Damascenes outside the popular quarters joined the fight along the barricades. Many people independently joined the militia bands roaming the city. A substantial number of women even organized marches in support of the revolt, but the elite groups held back. Not until 1926, when the revolt showed signs of strengthening, did

DRUZE IN SYRIA

In the post-1860 period, many of the Druze who felt persecuted after the civil war in Mount Lebanon moved to the Hawran, a grain-producing region of southern Syria. They were joined by Druze emigrating from Palestine and other parts of Syria before and during World War I. The migration into the Hawran required that the Druze militarily defeat the bedouin who had traditionally dominated the region, but over time the two groups came to an accommodation that benefited them both. The bedouin received the right to graze their animals on the lands after the grain harvest, and the Druze employed bedouin camel caravans to bring their grain to markets

in Damascus. By clearing additional land for cultivation, the Druze newcomers brought the Hawran into the world market for grain and spread the wealth across all the families settling in the region. For centuries, the area's mountainous terrain had made it autonomous, but in the late 19th century, the Ottomans partially succeeded in reestablishing governmental control in the region. Druze revolts of 1896 and 1910 restored a measure of local autonomy; World War I accelerated the process since Hawran farms continued to grow substantial quantities of wheat while much of the surrounding area faced droughts.

the notables come to the fore to raise money throughout Damascus and central Syria, broadcast the events in their newspapers, and join in the military battles. With their widely disseminated newspaper articles and slogans, the elite helped define this revolt as a specifically Syrian nationalist movement against French colonization.

Despite the combined efforts of the elites and the populace, the revolt could not withstand the French indefinitely, and the rebels certainly did not have the military power to unseat the French completely. French officials brought in additional troops from their other colonies to augment those in the Armée du Levant and the Troupes Spéciales. By 1927 the revolt was over, and those who had led it were in jail, in exile, or in the most extreme cases executed by French order. The participants from the popular quarters faced the brunt of the punishment, while the elites received light punishment or none at all.

National Bloc

In the aftermath of the revolt, the notables of Damascus and the northern city of Aleppo joined together to revise their roles as intermediaries between the colonizing forces and the Syrian people. Forming the National Bloc, they offered to work with the French to establish pathways toward independence, a policy epitomized by their slogan of “honorable cooperation.” They promised their Syrian constituents that they would demand of the French the right to draw up a constitution and form a representative government. They would also insist on clarification of the legal relationship between France and Syria and the addition of new positions for Syrians within the administration. The French rewarded their overtures by establishing a parliament and holding elections in August 1928. After the second parliament convened on June 7, 1932, its members elected Muhammad ‘Ali al-‘Abid as the first president of the Republic of Syria. In honor of the event, the new Syrian flag was unfurled atop the building, displaying the green, white, and black stripes that had constituted the flag of the Arab Revolt, with the addition of three stars in the center to symbolize Syria’s separate national status.

Despite these French concessions, the National Bloc faced insurmountable obstacles in achieving any of the goals of “honorable cooperation.” To be truly popular with voters, the members had to recommend policies that clearly defied French ambitions in Syria; yet to maintain their government positions, they had to appease the French mandate authorities. They had to also recognize that the French could rely on

more loyal notables from different parts of the country to pass pro-French legislation through the parliament and cabinet. The French had obtained the support of shaykhs and landowners in the rural and nomadic areas by offering them a great deal of local autonomy in return for their loyalty.

In elections for the 1932 parliament, French authorities gerrymandered the districts to favor those who were nonpolitical and loyal, especially those from rural districts and among the religious minorities. In Damascus, where the National Bloc was strongest, the French placed prominent members under surveillance, suppressed opposition newspapers, and refused to allow nationalist manifestos to be printed and disseminated. On the days of voting in 1932, rumors of ballot stuffing ran rampant, and the French army moved into the streets of Damascus to control the demonstrations that broke out. The National Bloc still won the majority of parliamentary seats in the election, but it had to share power in the cabinet with pro-French politicians and was unable to pass much legislation. This pattern repeated itself throughout the 1930s, as the National Bloc continued to push for French concessions but received few. As in the case of Lebanon, members of parliament signed a new treaty with the French in 1936 granting Syria additional independence, but the French parliament failed to ratify it, so the political relationship between Syria and France did not change on the eve of World War II.

Geographically, however, Syria lost sovereignty over the sanjak (district) of Alexandretta, situated in the northwestern corner of the country astride the border with Turkey. This district had a multiethnic population of Turks, 'Alawi, Armenians, Sunni Arabs, Christian Arabs, Kurds, Circassians, and Jews. Turks made up the largest group, with about 39 percent of the population, but no one group held a demographic majority. The Turkish government renounced its claim to the district in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 but continued to demand that the French government grant special provisions to the Turkish population living there. The 1936 Franco-Syrian treaty reaffirmed Syrian control over the province, but the Turks declared that such an action would endanger the Turkish residents if specific protections for them were not included in the treaty. On November 29, 1937, the French brought the issue before the League of Nations, which subsequently voted to allow the sanjak to form an independent government. In June 1939, the new assembly for the district dissolved itself and Alexandretta became a formal province of the Turkish Republic.

Rebellion and State Construction in Iraq

When the British army occupied Iraq in 1917, many of the large landowners and tribal shaykhs who had emerged as local power brokers under late Ottoman rule endorsed the action and sought to gain positions within the new government, providing their services as intermediaries to the British in the same way they had done for the Ottomans. But others opposed British rule and rebelled in summer 1920.

The Ottomans had begun transforming the Iraqi provinces in the 19th century so they could better collect revenues and establish Tanzimat institutions. Midhat Pasha, the governor in Baghdad from 1869 to 1872 and one of the future authors of the 1876 Ottoman constitution, introduced municipal councils in Iraqi cities so that local notables could become part of the state project. The Ottomans cleaned out old canals and built new ones, while expanding the number of pumps for irrigation to increase the amount of agricultural land put into cultivation. The Ottoman Land Law of 1858 enticed tribal leaders, merchants, and tax farmers to register their lands as private property and invest in agricultural improvements. On large estates, owners moved over to cash cropping, particularly of wheat. They accelerated cultivation of this lucrative product after the Suez Canal opened in 1869 when more cost-effective means of shipping became available to Iraqi landowners. Although it had needed to import large quantities of grain at the beginning of the century, by the end of

SHI'ISM IN IRAQ

In the early 19th century, Shi'ism in Iraq was primarily an urban phenomenon centered on the two shrine cities of Najaf and Karbala; during the century, Arab tribesmen from the surrounding countryside began to convert in large numbers. These tribes had started migrating from the Arabian Peninsula to the southern regions of Iraq in the 17th century. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, they began migrating to escape Saudi-Wahhab raids. Once in Iraq, they encountered the Ottoman administration's efforts to centralize its control over the Shi'i-dominated cities of Karbala and Najaf. The combined effects of migration

and Ottoman pressure disrupted tribal cohesion and authority, forcing tribesmen to seek new relationships for protection. In Shi'ism converts found support and protection among the mujtahids and merchants of the shrine cities. Meanwhile, the mujtahids retained their influence and authority even under Ottoman centralization efforts, as evidenced by their intervention in Qajar political events throughout the 19th century. Due to the migration and conversions, Shi'ism expanded well beyond the urban areas, and Shi'a made up just over 50 percent of the population of the Ottoman Iraqi provinces when World War I ended in 1918.

the 19th century, Iraq was a net exporter of grain. While some tribal shaykhs lost influence under these new policies, other shaykhs and urban merchants performed vital intermediary functions for the Ottomans.

Ottoman centralization policies had produced stakeholders among the students who attended modern schools and who graduated into positions in the expanded administration, but the numbers were limited because the Ottomans tended to import officials from elsewhere rather than employ large numbers of local Iraqis. As a result, many felt disenfranchised.

The rebels in 1920 included the Shi'i tribal shaykhs who were closely aligned with the Shi'i mujtahids in and around the shrine cities. They opposed British control over Iraq and the formation of a secular government, which they assumed would follow. They were joined by Iraqi Sharifian officers who had returned home after the Arab Revolt and wanted Faysal to be Iraq's king. Iraqi Ottoman bureaucratic officials who had been refused positions by the British also numbered among the rebels. This was not an easy coalition, and the groups did not work to coordinate their activities. It was a case of disparate groups rebelling for their own regional reasons against a shared enemy. Just as in Turkey and Syria, local leaders sought to hold or gain positions in any kind of government being formed, but the rebellions acquired a nationalist patina because the one purpose the groups shared was to defend Iraq from British colonialism.

By October 1920, the rebellion was over, crushed by British troops and Royal Air Force (RAF) planes, and Faysal was appointed to the throne of this British-ruled region. Following this rebellion, Britain united the provinces of predominantly Shi'i Basra and Sunni Baghdad. In 1926, the British added the northern province of Mosul to the state of Iraq, including the towns of Erbil and al-Sulaymaniyya so that British oil companies could control any oil discovered in the region. The largest demographic group in most of these northern regions was Kurdish, although the population comprised large portions of Arabs and Turkomans—descendants of the Turkic tribes who had migrated to the region beginning in the 11th century.

King Faysal's Government

When King Faysal took the throne in 1921, the same questions about what kind of state would be formed and who would be leaders in the government came to the forefront as they had in Iraq's neighboring states. To create a government loyal to his throne, King Faysal elevated to top military and civilian positions the Sharifian officers who had rebelled on his behalf or followed him from Syria; he rehired the Ottoman Iraqi



FIGURE 5.4.
King Faysal of
Iraq (*in white*)
meeting with
a visitor in the
presidential pal-
ace in Baghdad,
probably his
brother, Emir
Abdullah of
Transjordan.

bureaucrats to preside over the expanding governmental apparatus and make them stakeholders for his leadership. The Sunni large landowners and merchants in and around Baghdad who had not participated in the rebellion were awarded positions in parliament and the cabinet.

Meanwhile, King Faysal and the British also worked to create divisions between the Shi'a, rewarding the tribal shaykhs who had chosen not to rebel against the British and punishing the shaykhs and mujtahids who had. The government courted select Shi'i shaykhs, believing they would respond to privileges by enforcing obedience among the tribesmen under their control. The British built favor with these rural tribal shaykhs to form a bulwark against the potentially rebellious urban areas and ensure that government institutions would be installed in the rural areas. The tribal areas in general came under a special Tribal Disputes Code that gave shaykhs power over legal issues among their tribesmen. Many shaykhs also moved into Baghdad to take up positions in the new parliament.

Over the next years, King Faysal proved adept at shifting these groups into and out of power in order to guarantee that no coalition could grow

powerful enough to rise against him. He exploited the fact that these disparate groups did not necessarily agree on all elements of governance. The notables from the Ottoman era wanted to maintain their influential positions, and while King Faysal included them in his administration, he also obliged them to compete with each other for governmental influence. He elevated the Sharifians to many of the top posts so they would be pitted against the established Iraqi notables, who especially resented the Sharifians' elite status, given that these upstarts hailed from lower-to medium-middle-class families, families that would have been social inferiors under the Ottomans. Rural landowners and shaykhs vied for positions against urban merchants.

Iraqi Constitution

The Iraqi constitution, ratified in 1924, gave King Faysal means to exert control over the process of elections. It provided for a bicameral legislature with a two-stage election process: the initial elections chose electors who, in the second phase, selected the representatives. The two stages allowed the king and British officials many opportunities for guaranteeing the election of a pliable parliament. The constitution reserved few legislative rights for the members of parliament because the king retained the power to confirm or veto all laws, call elections, and prorogue parliament at will; the cabinet answered to the king, not to parliament. The constitution included language promising equality for all before the law and freedom of speech, press, association, and religion, but the government recognized few of these rights in day-to-day practice.

As a result, only a small number of people held office in the cabinet or positions in parliament in the interwar years. In the 21 cabinets formed between 1920 and 1936, 57 men served, with only 14 holding any real influence. In parliament, a relatively small number of notable families provided the majority of the members of parliament and, as they had under the Ottomans, used their positions to pass laws giving them access to more land, more trade contracts, and—given Iraqi agriculture dependence on water from rivers and wells—the ever important water pumps.

Like their counterparts in Damascus, the notables who held the few positions in government also worked to establish nationalist credibility by forming political parties and associated newspapers. These parties lacked political platforms and failed to mobilize anyone outside the existing client networks. The politicians' papers repeated a nationalist mantra of anti-imperialism, but the politicians themselves benefited from

their positions in the colonial government and from British protection for the system as a whole. The Iraqi notables occupied the same equivocal position as the notables in the National Bloc because they worked on behalf of Arab nationalist causes but were dependent on King Faysal and the British for their governmental power. Nonetheless, these papers did begin to politicize the urban educated population around ideas of fighting against British imperialism and for the establishment of a truly representative government.

Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930

The 1930 signing of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty and the country's subsequent admittance into the League of Nations granted the Iraqi government power over its own defense and state institutions. The Iraqi government, in exchange, agreed to allow the British to use all of the country's facilities in time of war and to move troops into the country if necessary. The RAF was given the right to maintain two major bases in Iraq in return for supplying the Iraqi military with equipment and advisers. The negotiations had taken place because the British government was fulfilling its duty to usher the Iraq Mandate into independence while also guaranteeing that British military interests would be protected. Although Iraq was granted independence before the neighboring mandates were, it was an independence severely circumscribed by continuing British control over Iraqi government and territory.

Rebellion and State Construction in Transjordan

At the San Remo Conference of 1920, Britain assumed control over the Palestine Mandate and soon divided it into two, with Palestine to the west of the River Jordan and Transjordan to the east. This division exempted the newly defined Transjordan region from the provisions of the Balfour Declaration of November 2, 1917, which now applied only to the Palestine region. Britain's colonial secretary, Winston Churchill, appointed Abdullah (r. 1921–1951), the second son of Sharif Hussein, as emir of the new state of Transjordan. At that point, members of the Hashemite family ruled both Transjordan and Iraq. Emir Abdullah and his British advisers chose the town of Amman as the capital of this new emirate because its small size and lack of importance prior to 1921 meant that it could be remade as a city inextricably connected to the new Hashemite project.

Initially, Transjordan's borders encompassed only what is now the northern districts of Jordan, but in November 1925 the Transjordanian-

Najd Agreement expanded the borders appreciably. Negotiations took place after repeated battles between Saudi and Transjordanian tribes over access to grazing lands and water sources. To end this conflict over land, Transjordan gave up the fertile Wadi Sirhan region on the Arabian Peninsula to Ibn Saud's new state but gained control over the town of Ma'an and the port of Aqaba, which had been traditionally considered part of the Hijaz.

In the Anglo-Transjordanian Treaty of 1928, Transjordan, once considered a region within the Palestine Mandate, was granted the status of a separate emirate, subject to British control over foreign affairs, defense, and finance. Britain retained the right to station troops in Transjordan and use Transjordanian troops to protect its strategic interests and military installations in the region. Further, Britain could exploit the natural resources of the country and veto any piece of legislation that hampered Britain's ability to fulfill its international obligations. In return, Britain pledged to give the government an annual subsidy to cover much of its operating costs. In the same year the treaty was signed, the Organic Law was passed, which proclaimed Emir Abdullah the head of state with hereditary rights and declared that the government would comprise an Executive and a Legislative Council. This law severely curtailed the powers accruing to the councils, however, as it gave Emir Abdullah the power, with few restrictions, to appoint members of the first and dismiss members of both.

Setting up a government and finding and training the stakeholders proved as difficult in Transjordan as in the surrounding mandates. Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Peake established the Arab Legion in 1923, and for the next two decades it served primarily as an internal police and gendarmerie force. This new force worked with the British RAF to subdue a number of tribal revolts that broke out in the early 1920s. Once order was restored, Emir Abdullah courted local shaykhs with outlays of cash, land, and cars to bring them into alliance with him personally and with the state he was creating under British supervision. The shaykhs and tribes were especially important building blocks of support in Transjordan because the country lacked the base of large landowners whose loyalty could have been ensured by granting them positions in the government. After the Ottoman Land Law, small and medium-sized farmers in Transjordan had registered the land in their own names, unlike in so many other regions where only large landowners had. In this situation, shaykhs were the only brokers who could bring large numbers of clients in service to the government.



FIGURE 5.5.

A Pan-Islamic conference hosted by Emir Abdullah of Transjordan in a bedouin tent in Shunet Nimrin on December 12, 1931.

The groups left out of this state configuration in the interwar period were the urban merchants and the small but growing numbers of Western-educated Transjordanian students. Emir Abdullah and the British disenfranchised them by employing non-Transjordanians in the top positions in government from the very beginning of their project of state formation. Between 1921 and 1946, only eight men, all of whom came from Syria and Palestine, held the post of chief minister: not a single one was a Transjordanian. Although the bureaucracy expanded during the interwar period, Arab officials seconded from the Palestine Mandate dominated the available positions throughout the 1920s. The initial impetus for making such appointments was that Transjordan lacked the skilled officials to fill government positions. As the Western-educated stratum voiced its opposition to state policies in the 1930s, Palestinians maintained their leadership positions because of their loyalty to Emir Abdullah and the British.

To force the state to respect their rights, by 1928 Transjordanians had begun to organize, rallying to the slogan of “Transjordan for the Transjordanians” and opposing the provisions of the Anglo-Transjordanian Treaty and Organic Law. Strikes broke out in cities throughout the coun-

try, and 150 activists from among the tribal leaders and the urban merchant and educated class met in Amman on July 25 to draw up a list of demands for Emir Abdullah. They called for the adoption of a truly constitutional and representative government led by Transjordanians. When they won a large number of seats in parliament in 1928, they proved so vocal in their opposition to Emir Abdullah's policies that in all subsequent elections Emir Abdullah and the British worked to guarantee that only loyal followers, mostly tribal shaykhs, large merchants, and the small cadre of large landowners, won election. Parliament had initially shown signs of being a venue for debate about governance, but within months Emir Abdullah and the British had turned it into an agency for bringing elites into the state and excluding those who opposed state policies.

Rebellion and State Construction in Saudi Arabia

In the aftermath of World War I, Sharif Hussein lost British support because he opposed the division of the Arab territories into mandates. As a result, in the 1920s he had few means to defend the Hijaz against attacks from the forces of Ibn Saud. As a last effort to keep the Hashemite family in charge of the holy sites, he abdicated in favor of his son, Emir 'Ali, and went into exile in Cyprus in 1924. But this move did not shore up Emir 'Ali's position, and he was defeated by Ibn Saud's forces on December 5, 1924. In December 1925, Ibn Saud declared himself king of the Hijaz and sultan of Najd and its dependencies. In recognition of Ibn Saud's success, the British signed the Treaty of Jeddah with him in May 1927, declaring the complete independence of the dominions of His Majesty the King of the Hijaz and of Najd. Ibn Saud announced the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on September 22, 1932. Although it was not a colony, the kingdom was dependent on British aid, making its position ambiguous in relation to the British Empire.

As of 1920, no government agencies existed, and few had been built by the time independence was declared in 1932. At that point, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's government consisted only of an eight-member Shura Council of the Hijaz, made up of posts filled by non-Saudi Arabs and Europeans. Other government branches remained similarly informal throughout the 1920s and 1930s, with the king convening a series of daily diwans (councils) to consult with his advisers and hear requests from his subjects. Meanwhile, the relationship between the Saudi royal family and the Wahhab clerics became more institutionalized. Since the 18th century, the Saudi-Wahhab alliance had led to many military victo-

ries, but it had been an informal relationship in which both parties had reciprocal duties. As the government structure evolved in the 1920s, the two parties recognized that they needed to remain loyal to each other to maintain their relative influence and their joint control over the country. The Wahhab clerics required Saudi funding and official recognition to spread their ideas, and the Saudi royal family needed the clerics' religious sanction to prove their legitimacy. As their alliance continued to evolve, the clerics issued fatwas rationalizing actions by the state while the royal family granted the clerics leeway to set the cultural agenda for the new state-in-formation.

As the Saudis sought to build up a national army, they found they had to destroy the tribal military force that had brought them to power. Ibn Saud had conquered the Arabian Peninsula with help from a group of bedouin calling themselves the Ikhwan (the Brothers). Initially the Ikhwan accepted the authority of Ibn Saud as imam of the Muslim community with a passion similar to that exhibited by the Qizilbash for Shah Isma'il of the Safavids in the 16th century. They not only defeated groups militarily but enforced on those they conquered the Wahhab interpretation of the shari'a in Ahasa' in 1913 and in Ta'if in 1924; they massacred those they considered nonbelievers. Ibn Saud's desire for settlement and centralization left little room for the autonomy of the Ikhwan because they were difficult to contain and control. Once Ibn Saud established his position as king in Riyadh, he worked to curtail their freedom, and the Ikhwan came out in open opposition to his leadership. To destroy this group, Ibn Saud recruited men from the Najd oases into a separate military force. With RAF aid, he succeeded in killing and exiling the Ikhwan and laying the groundwork for a national army.

Conclusion

The post-World War I period began with rebellions in every corner of the Ottoman and Qajar Empires, bringing down the royal families of both. These years represent a moment in Middle Eastern history when many possible state configurations could have been adopted and leaders were eager to participate in any government that emerged. These leaders mainly sought to defend their local positions against the infiltration of European or local challengers, but collectively, in one region after another, they also created a proto-nationalist movement, as all the different military organizations worked toward many of the same goals. However, European colonizers and their local collaborators quickly came to the

fore and punished those who had rebelled. The window then closed on most of the state options. Most rebels found themselves losers in the new state configurations, but the winners were by no means guaranteed stable positions of governance.

In Turkey and Iran, Mustafa Kemal and Reza Shah turned from rebels into state leaders, with the former choosing to elevate a new elite into positions of power to implement his policies, while the latter subsumed the old landowners and tribes into a new centralized government. They both established authoritarian states where they dictated the parameters of institution building and the elements defining Turkish and Iranian identities. During the interwar years, both produced stakeholders for their programs, but both also struggled to impose on the citizenries what they envisioned as comprehensive programs of modernity.

The Europeans, who had been intervening in Middle Eastern politics for over a century, took the lead in drawing borders and establishing the state structures throughout the Arab world. The rebels in these areas failed to stop the Europeans or earn places in the new state governments being formed, but their opposition made state formation a fraught exercise. By choosing to fill their new state structures with the old elites, the Europeans and their allied local leaders created a conundrum that had lasting consequences. Integrating the former elites—whether merchants, landowners, or tribal leaders—into the new governments proved to be a successful tactic for gaining the largest number of supporters in the quickest fashion because these intermediaries brought along their tribesmen and client networks.

Yet by working with the European colonizers, these intermediaries placed themselves in an ambiguous position. Because they worked for the colonial governments, they benefited from the colonizers' largesse, but to retain client loyalty, they had to present themselves as nationalist leaders. Rarely were they able to effectively balance those contradictory roles. By the 1930s, leaders in all the Arab mandates faced new rebellions, not from the old tribal or religious sectors but from students, professionals, workers, and military officers who were trained by these new post-World War I states. These new groups challenged the legitimacy of the local intermediaries and the right of their European colonial overlords to speak on their behalf.

